

REMARKS

After entry of this amendment, claims 1 - 6, 11 - 13, and 15 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, and 4 - 6, and 8 have been amended. Claims 7 - 10 and 14 have been cancelled. New claim 15 has been added.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner notes numerous phrases that are unclear. Further, the Examiner notes other phrases that are confusing.

Claim 1 has now been amended to require a decorative film having a surface attachable to a foam backing. Further, claim 1 requires the penetration area for permitting deployment of an airbag. In addition, a notch is disclosed commencing at the surface that is attachable to the foam backing and terminating in the material of the decorative film before the side remote from the surface attachable to the foam backing. Further, claim 1 requires that the edges surrounding the notch at the surface attachable to the foam backing are closed by a welded region of an outer layer of the decorative film consisting of thermoplastic material.

The foam backing is not part of the invention. However, the decorative film has a surface that is attachable to a foam backing. The film also has a notch commencing at the surface that is attachable to the foam backing and the notch terminates in the material before the side remote from the surface attachable to the foam backing. Further, claim 1 requires that the notch at the surface attachable to the foam backing is closed covered by a welded region of an outer layer of a decorative film consisting of the thermoplastic material wherein the welded region is formed by welding edges surrounding the notch at the surface only. Although the foam backing is not part of the invention, the features to the surface that attaches to the foam backing are important. The Amendment to claim 1 should overcome the § 112 rejection.

Claim 6 has been amended to require that, of the at least two layers, at least the layer having the surface attachable to the foam backing consists of

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thermoplastic material. Again, the foam backing is not part of the invention. However, the decorative film has a surface that is attachable to the foam backing and is thermoplastic material. And in claim 6, the decorative film has at least two layers and at least the layer that has the surface that is attachable to the foam backing consists of thermoplastic material. The Amendment to claim 6 should overcome the § 112 rejection.

The claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 9 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) by Kawakubo et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,065,771). Further claim 3 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawakubo et al. in view of Rahmstorf et al. In addition, claims 10 - 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawakubo et al.

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome the rejections under Kawakubo. Claims 7 - 10 are cancelled. New claim 15 is distinguished over Kawakubo. Claim 1 requires that the notch commences or starts in the film at a surface that is attachable to the foam backing and terminates in the material of the decorative film before the side remote from the surface attachable to the foam backing. As can be seen in Patent '771, the notch 66 in '771 is not covered by a welded region surrounding the notch at the surface only. If the Examiner considers 66 the notch, then the notch in '771 is not covered by the decorative film. If the Examiner considers the slit 64 as the notch, then Patent '771 does not show the slit terminating in the material before the side remote from the surface attachable to the foam backing. Therefore, claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

Claim 15 now requires a molded decorative film for use in vehicle interiors having a first surface and second opposing surface, the first surface is attachable to a foam backing. The film consists of a penetration area of permitting deployment of an airbag. The penetration area has a break line defined by a cross-sectional weakness in the film. The cross-sectional weakness includes a notch commencing in the first surface and terminating in the film before the second surface, wherein edges of the notch at the first surface, only, are pressed together and welded for providing a break line commencing and terminating completely within the first

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and second surfaces of the film. These features are not shown. Regarding Patent '771, if the Examiner states that the Item 66 is the notch, then Patent '771 does not show the notch covered to provide a break line that commences and terminates completely within the first and second surfaces of the film. If the Examiner states that Item 64 is the notch, then Item 64 also does not show the break line terminating before the first and second surfaces of the film. Therefore, claim 15 is believed to be allowable over the cited prior art.

This Amendment should place this case in condition for passing to issue. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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